



Wandsworth Society

Newsletter September 2008

Society cross-pollination

gardeners to get together



Morning glory ... crimson climbing roses ... window boxes full of petunias. Walking around Battersea and Wandsworth it is obvious that there are a huge number of residents who love plants and gardening. So why isn't there a gardening society? Kensington has one, Chelsea has one, but (correct me if I'm wrong) there is no gardening club in our area.

Gardening is good for the soul and good for the soil. It can be relaxing, rewarding, frustrating and infuriating. It can be an extravagant hobby or a thrifty way of raising one's own vegetables.

Whether they have a garden, a patio, a balcony or a window box, gardeners love to talk gardening with each other. I believe that a thriving gardening club could be started in Wandsworth and Battersea, but it will take a bit of time and planning to get it going. As the editor of the Battersea Society newsletter, as well as being a keen but neglectful gardener, I have floated the idea and some members have responded. We have a meeting planned for Thursday 25 September. If any Wandsworth Society members are interested in helping to set up a local gardening society, please get in touch with me at

newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk

Please don't expect an immediate reply, as I will be away from late August to mid-September.

Jenny Sheridan.

VAT on building repairs

There is a campaign for VAT on building repairs and renovation to be cut from 17.5% to 5%.

New build projects are exempt from VAT, whereas the repair and renovation of existing buildings is charged at 17.5%. The Civic Trust believes that this balance should be redressed to:

- reduce the number of empty homes
- reduce the number of those living in substandard housing
- protect the countryside
- stop the destruction of decent existing buildings
- help preserve our national heritage
- increase the number of zero carbon homes
- help tackle fuel poverty
- reduce the number of rogue builders

for more information visit the Civic Trust web site

<http://www.civicsocieties.org.uk/join-a-campaign/vat-on-buildings/>

If you would like to support the campaign, sign the online petition at <http://www.cutthevat.co.uk>

Please support the campaign, which the London Forum requested through the National Committee of Regional Civic Trust Associations.

Wandsworth Society

September 2008

Chairman
John Dawson
210 Beechcroft Road SW17 7DP
phone 020 8785 0077
Vice-Chairman
Phillip Whyte
49 West Side Wandsworth
Common London SW18 2EE
020 8874 4745

Secretary
Gill Cutress
Mooring 7 Lightermen's Way
SW18
020 8637 0975

Treasurer
Peter Farrow
5 Windmill Road SW18 2EU
phone 020 8874 3274

Membership Secretary
Gill Gray
1 Keble House Manor Fields Put-
ney Hill SW15
phone 020 8780 0866

Committee
Sheila Allen
13 Earlsfield Road SW18
phone 020 8874 2341
Bruce St Julian-Bown
39c Heathfield Road SW18
phone 020 8871 3872

Iain Gray
Studio 8 Royal Victoria
Patriotic Building SW18
phone 020 8870 4567
Valerie Taylor
35 Fishponds Road
SW17 7LH
020 8767 3814

Linda Ulrich
6 Spencer Park SW18
020 8874 5648

Meetings Team
Valerie Taylor - Aviva Walton
Wendy Cater - Brenda Ferry
Jenny Massey
Catherine Headley
Dianna Godden

Newsletter Team
Peter Farrow Iain Gray
Wendy Cater

Distribution Team
Paschal Allen - Iain Gray
Jan Passey - Wendy Cater

Sub-Committee
Convenors
Roads and transport -
Linda Ulrich
Open Spaces -
Bruce St Julian-Bown
Planning -
Phillip Whyte

What is happening to the weather ?

This newsletter has been simmering gently for some while over the summer. A summer that seems to have passed by quickly, and without a great deal of one of its main ingredients.

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a problem supposedly affecting people during the winter, when constant grey skies and rain can cause depression. It is not supposed to be a problem in the summer, but this summer seems to have been more like a warm autumn.

Apparently our summer of grey skies and rain is a consequence of global warming. So we are depressed physiologically by the gloomy weather, and by our guilt at our part in its cause.

Possibly time for a gin and tonic, it often helps.



Could it be the Parks Police are listening to the wrong weather forecasts ?

And in the next issue ...

The next newsletter will feature transport issues. We have trains, and boats and planes in Wandsworth. Yes we do, it may be that all the planes do is fly over, but we do have boats, there is a river taxi. And we also have feet and bicycles, buses and a heliport, and a fair share, possibly more than our fair share, of that other mode of transport - traffic.

Odd, isn't it, how when you are driving somewhere you are simply in your car, most likely doing something quite important, but all those other people in their cars are doing nothing more than creating a traffic jam?

Possibly time for another gin and tonic, it often helps.

The splendid photograph on the front cover was taken by Will Holland. An ordinary kind of tree, plane we think, having been pollarded, reflected in a puddle.

I'm laughing, and ...

getting wetter than I want to be

Will sent this a few weeks back, when it was raining a lot more than it is now, and who knows, by the time you read this, it could be raining as much as it was then. There's a word for this sort of thing, on the tip of my tongue ... annoying when this happens in mid-editorial flow, now I remember, the word is - summer.

They tell us that we are we are very fortunate to be living in this technological age and maybe we are, but there are certain drawbacks, for instance, how is it that when it rains the pavements along St Johns Hill become a veritable minefield of puddles with the pedestrian unable to walk in a straight line.

I really can't remember this happening in the non-technological age years ago. Admittedly when I come to think of it the paving stones were much larger and heavier, and although they must have been a pain to shift around they were, I presume a lot easier to lay flat, and once laid, stayed where they had been placed. I wonder why they were replaced?

And now it's bricks that are in fashion, and although very nice to look at, they are no better than the small



paving stones that they have replaced, for they still leave puddles galore. And now the next step is small paving stones and bricks being artistically combined which again look very nice, unless of course it rains. And then there are the parking bays, which fill up with water, maybe we could ask the Park's Department if they have any spare ducks.

Will Holland

The Thames River Taxi

its evening service

The Thames River Taxi has recently improved its evening service from our part of the world, now making it an especially useful and enjoyable way of getting into town for an evening out.

The ferry leaves Putney Pier at 1810 then Wandsworth Riverside Quarter at 1815 to arrive at Charing Cross Embankment at 1840 and Blackfriars at 1845. Various travel cards are accepted and, should you be planning a series of nights on the tiles, you can buy a reduced price season ticket. This is a wonderfully relaxing way in which to get to town, with a different slant on famous buildings.

For commuters, the morning services from Putney also offer an excellent means of travel.

Check the website thamesrivertaxi.com or phone 01342 322440 (mobile: 07831 574774) for up-to-date morning times because, as we write, one ferry is out of service for maintenance.

Awards and commendations

contemporary buildings in Wandsworth win praise – no, not Skydec



The Civic Trust has published its awards for 2008, and two buildings in Wandsworth feature in the list.

An Award was given to Herringbone Houses. They are the houses behind the bowling club on Lyford Road : in the ordinary course of events that would be information enough to identify their location.

However, there can be few roads in London, more likely there can be few roads anywhere, blessed with two bowling clubs, making it necessary to be more specific about which bowling club is meant.

It is the one at the northern end.

But as the houses are so distinctive it is probably not too great a cause for concern. They are the timber-clad houses visible over the less-than-appealing fence that hides the bowling green from the road.

The houses are described as refreshingly contemporary ... *the scheme offers a wide sequence of views from the houses through large glass openings* ... what in less contemporary schemes would be called windows, which equally offer fairly good views into the house, or they would if it wasn't for the net curtains, which annoyingly always seem to be blocking the view in.

Yes, obviously they are not net – nowhere near

contemporary enough. They are most likely voile.

Each house *has a stunning staircase running vertically through the building* ... that would be one of those newfangled vertical staircases, so much more contemporary than the old fashioned horizontal kind.

Our second building is the St John's Therapy Centre on St John's Hill, which received a Commendation. It is considered *well designed ... a bold and positive contemporary statement*.

Both buildings are worthy contenders for awards, and both were also successful in the Wandsworth Design Awards for 2007 organised by Wandsworth Council.

It is good to see. The borough is littered with new buildings designed to be 'in keeping'. All too often this results in poor pastiche. It is difficult to produce a good contemporary design. Congratulations to Alison Brooks Architects for the Herringbone Houses and Buschow Henley, the architects for the St John's Therapy Centre.

But - what do you think?

Angela Gorman, Development Manager with Groundwork, came to talk to the Wandsworth Society on 20th February 2008.

This national environmental charity has been around for 25 years, having been started with the help of Michael Heseltine in Liverpool. Originally involved with brownfield redevelopment, it has developed into a regeneration charity working mainly in deprived regions, with six operating themes:-

- land : with landscape architects, they encourage the development of and improvements to open space, to reconnect people with their surroundings. Groundwork is one of the largest landscape employers in the UK
- youth : helping young people to realise their potential. They work with Connexions and similar youth bodies, meeting on estates or in parks, for example, to improve the environment by and for local young people
- community : here local people are involved with consultation surveys etc to build stronger neighbourhoods. Groundwork works with many types of groups e.g. a residents association on an estate or 'friends of the local park' group.
- business : here the environmental impact of businesses is addressed in areas such as waste issues, energy efficiency or reducing environmental impact (and so saving money – a useful 'by-product'!)
- education : delivering learning and citizenship in and out of the classroom; their officers look at such matters as heritage, waste, climate change and eco-schools
- employment and training : delivering skills in horticulture and ground maintenance (along with other programmes). They especially aim to work with those harder to reach such as long-term unemployed or ex-offenders, enabling them to find work.

The seven London trusts of Groundwork in London are now gradually merging to form one body based in Waterloo. At board meetings in

October 2007, there was a formal agreement to merge the three Groundwork Trusts in South London into one new Trust, Groundwork London. From April 2008, Groundwork West London also becomes part of the new Groundwork London Trust; the turnover is expected to be around £9million.

Groundwork has introduced a new network of local Borough Steering Groups which oversee the projects for delivery and ensure that there are strong local links. They focus on supporting the development and delivery of local regeneration projects without the governance responsibilities. The Borough Steering Group in Wandsworth meets quarterly. All projects are discussed at the Borough Steering Group before starting; they have to go through assessments to ensure that they have met their objectives and to aim for continued funding, so establishing sustainable projects for the future. For example, Groundwork have been working in Merton for 12 years – their aim is to work in a community for a long time as regeneration is not achieved overnight!

Groundwork can assist or manage a wide variety of projects but cannot help with infrastructure which is solely a Council's responsibility (street lighting for example).

Having explained the basis of the charity, Angela went on to talk about the programme now taking place in Wandsworth under a six-year agreement from April 2007. Prior to the April launch in 2007, a feasibility study was carried out before the borough steering group was formed with council representatives and a local community representative. The programme of work for Groundwork in Wandsworth includes:

A - The Wandle Corridor - The GLA commissioned a report on Parks and Open Spaces; its recommendation was that the Wandle Valley Regional Park would be one of two such areas in London. A Regional Park is an area or corridor or network of open spaces, accessible by public transport offering a range of facilities including recreation, ecology, landscape, heritage etc. Access issues, boundaries, possible sites for inclusion (Young's?) and community involvement are all to be discussed and agreed. All four boroughs involved (Wandsworth, Merton,

Sutton and Croydon) have to liaise and think about improvements; the Wandsworth Society input to the discussion document. One of the aims is for signage for the Wandle Trail to be improved, landscaping the river path, linking with Sustrans; the Trail is a key part of the Regional Park development. The boundary has yet to be decided although the steering group is in the process of agreeing a first stage implementation plan. The Wandle Forum are involved and could have a wider role. There are many open spaces nearby hence the difficulty in establishing a border. All four councils are 'on board' as well as local landowners such the National Trust, Mitcham Common conservators, Natural England, the Environment Agency (in connection with flood defence), English Heritage and the Museum of London. (Comment – with such a head of steam as this surely something really good will be delivered!?).

There is a website whose main aim is to get interested parties to comment – see www.wandlevalleypark.org.uk. At end March 2008, there was to be an initial analysis and the results will be fed into the implementation plan.

B - Open spaces – the Placemakers scheme aims to improve local open spaces and can cover such

things as friends' groups, dog-free areas, ways to reduce litter; they work with many other bodies (transport, planning etc). Angela said that Wandsworth Council has nearly got the money for a master plan of improvements to King Georges's Park so that new play equipment could be provided, a mobility maze set up for older people and to open up access to the River Wandle. All plans are yet to be confirmed.

C - Young People – an example is getting young people in Roehampton to work through their issues leading to a regeneration process, and helping with funding to get agreed projects up and running.

D - Town Centres and businesses - working with businesses in the community
Wandsworth Society members present asked many questions; the evening's subject obviously touched a chord with those who want their local environment to be improved and sustained. And a question about whether the Wandle Valley Regional Park would have any part of it left wild received the encouraging answer 'yes'!

Burying ghosts

Panther Soup by John Gimlette

John met Putnam Flint at a dinner party and learned that he had been one of 2.7 million Americans who smashed their way into the Reich at the end of World War II when much of Western Europe was in chaos. What's become of the battlefields now? Or the people that lived on them? Is there any trace of the 12m Americans who followed to assist in the rebuilding?

John Gimlette persuaded the initially reluctant 85-year-old Putnam Flint, now living comfortably in Boston, Massachusetts, to retrace the old campaign trail of 60 years earlier when he had fought with the tank destroyers (or 'Panthers') and ridden along with the great wheeled city that rolled through Europe from Marseille to the Austrian Tyrol. It had been an undertaking of unimaginable scale and

complexity and for most of this life, Flint has lived with the memories of the tank-mangled sludge - the 'Panther Soup' of the title.

John Gimlette is a warm, charming and erudite speaker who gave a captivating glimpse into Europe through the eyes and memories of Putnam Flint in the revisiting together. As many of us have now read other books he has written and kindly introduced to the Society ("At the Tomb of the Inflatable Pig" and "Theatre of Fish") and know his writing is as fine as his speaking, many copies were purchased whilst John in his taxi raced to Heathrow to catch his plane for Athens!

Valerie Taylor

Wandsworth Artists' Open House

September 27 and 28 and October 4 and 5

Come and meet local artists and see their work as part of the Wandsworth Artists' Open House.

Local artists will be opening their doors to visitors as part of the event, which takes place on the weekends of September 27 and 28 and October 4 and 5.

The annual events are organised by Wandsworth Council's arts office in conjunction with media partners SW Magazine and rise magazine.

As part of the initiative visitors can enjoy a dazzling variety of artworks ranging from paintings and screen prints to sculptures, ceramics and jewellery on show in homes and studios across the borough. The weekends also give art lovers the perfect opportunity to meet artists and buy direct from them.

Local artist and Society member Honor Brogan won a special commendation from the Hugh Casson Drawing Award at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition this year for her stunning picture of a Pembrokeshire harbour. The drawing has already been bought, but more of Honor's drawings and paintings can be seen at her home near Wandsworth Common.

Battersea Reach will host a number of exhibitions – a large group show by graduates of Wimbledon School of Art, two solo shows, as well as other on-site treats like the tasty pastries at cake and coffee boutique, Cake Boy.

With over 200 artists showing at more than 90 venues across the borough, there will be something to suit all tastes.

To find out who is showing near you, get a copy of the official guide, which includes a map and list of studio addresses with pictures and descriptions of what you can expect to find there.

Download a copy of the official guide at
www.wandsworth.gov.uk/arts
pick up a copy at any Wandsworth library
or call 020 8871-8711
to have one sent to you.

Open House London

Architecture Up Close

20 and 21 September 2008

This year two of the borough's most important buildings will be open to the general public.

Royal Victoria Patriotic Building

Fitzhugh Grove Trinity Road SW18 3SX

Opening Times

Sat - 10am-5pm

Sun - 10am-5pm

Regular tours, first come basis. Last entry 4.45pm

by train to Wandsworth Common, Wandsworth Town, or Clapham Junction;

by bus 77 or 219

Springfield University Hospital

61 Glenburnie Road SW17 7DJ

Opening Times

Sat - 10am-1pm

Sat tours at 10am, 11am, 12noon, first come basis.

Meet at the 'Committee Room' in the main building.

by tube to Tooting Bec

by rail to Earlsfield, Wandsworth Common or Balham

by bus G1 219 or 319

If you visited in 1999, when the Society organised the first Open House at Springfield Hospital, this is an opportunity to see what has happened since then, or If you have heard about the proposals for the hospital site this is a chance to see what is happening on the ground.

'Springfield Garden Village is a plan for the regeneration of the 168-year-old Springfield University Hospital site. It is a vision to transform a crumbling, 80-acre site into a vibrant mixed-use development that places health and well being at the heart of a thriving new community.'

For the complete Open House programme go to www.openhouse.org.uk

or telephone 020 3006 7008

And don't forget that outside London ...

thousands of buildings and places across England will be throwing their doors open free of charge for Heritage Open Days 2008, Thursday 11 to Sunday 14 September. Co-ordinated by the Civic Trust and supported by English Heritage, this annual celebration of architecture, history and culture spans fifty counties from Kent to Cumbria, with major cities, towns and hundreds of villages, bringing curiosity, discovery and enjoyment right onto people's doorsteps. We are also delighted to announce that over 450 properties and events have been registered by Civic Societies of which roughly 50% are new events for this year, clearly making Civic Societies a key part in the largest cultural volunteer event in the country.

Why not check out this year's Heritage Open Days event directory at www.heritageopendays.org and plan your Heritage Open Days trip

Dance 1050 - 1660

Françoise Carter Thursday 22 May

A year or so ago, Françoise Carter delivered an illustrated talk to the Wandsworth Society about Japanese gardens, a subject she'd explored in depth while working in Japan.

This year she took us to the early years of her career and training in dance and ballet: and her fascination, both then and on her return to Britain, with the history of dance.



Françoise has collected an unusual and wide portfolio of slides depicting forms of early dance, both that used in country celebrations of annual events (rogation-tide, harvest, Christmas, May-day etc) and in its use in courtly life. Dance was used as a means of introducing young members of the opposite sex to each other under the eagle eyes of their chaperones. Convention allowed methods of indicating that a prospective suitor was, or was not welcome to pursue an interest. A flutter of handkerchief here, a particular movement of hand or fluttered eye contact there, and other similar, well-practised devices were used to great effect.

Whether for rural celebration, courtly love, state occasion, religious rite, spectacle or Royal Progression, Françoise demonstrated the importance of dance from medieval times to the present day.

Her knowledge of the subject is profound. Unfortunately she had no time to talk about the importance of dance in the traditional lives of people in other parts of the world. What Françoise did was to leave us with a sense of wonder, of colour, an appreciation of movement and artifice - and a wish that our modern world had not left so much behind for all the beauty and variety of dance we have today.

Brenda Ferry

Weather and Climate Change

Martin Ince Thursday 24 April

Martin Ince, lecturer, advisor to government, scientific bodies and specialised magazines, traveller, fortunately lives in our own Borough of Wandsworth.

The Rough Guide series of travel books recently published a book on “Weather and Climate Change” written by him. This is an erudite yet highly readable book, which describes the content of his fascinating talk in more detail.

Amongst other items, Martin described the rain forests of tropical Africa and the detrimental effect on environmental and living standards which occur through climate change; this change is being brought about not only by the natural variations of the earth’s movement around the sun but by the wilful mismanagement of nature’s bounty by mankind.

Weather sources are based on large areas of similarity such as waters of large oceans, open dryness of vast deserts, rain forests such as the density of tropical Africa or the Brazilian Mato Grosso and the scrublands of Siberia. Some of these areas are difficult for man to touch: but the clearance of the rain forests and the detrimental effect this has on source areas of weather formation is dangerous. Clearance not only affects local people’s lives, it affects and destroys insects, wildlife and all the infrastructure of natural life which cannot even be replaced by re-forestation. Forest fires occur in places that have never encountered them before simply because trees surrounding cleared earth are no longer able to retain the high moisture content of previous millenniums.

Martin Ince provided us with graphs and much information; enough to ensure we walked home troubled by man’s interference with nature and hoping the little we individually contribute to slow down the rate of climate change may make a difference.

Brenda Ferry

Events dear boy, events

some dates for your diary

Wednesday 24th September

A WALK THROUGH CHANGING EAST LONDON

led by Alan Fennell

Start: 10.30am outside the Overground ticket office at London Bridge. Bring a packed lunch.

The full walk will be from London Bridge to Hackney Wick (6 miles) but feel free to leave at Limehouse after 3 miles, or Mile End after 4 miles.

Much of the walk will be off-road along the Thames Path and the Regent's and Hertford Union Canals. The route includes the remarkable green bridge linking the two sides of the recently redesigned Mile End Park. The walk could be extended by 3/4 of a mile to see the Olympic site if there is a demand.

Wednesday 8th October

LOCAL TRANSPORT - A TALK ON BUS SERVICES

at Alvering Library 7.45 for 8pm. Details to follow.

Wednesday 19th November

A TALK BY GLEN BURTON OF DELANCEY

the new owners of Southside shopping mall - on the company's ideas and plans for the precinct at Alvering Library 7.45 for 8pm.



Sunday 2 November

Soiree

at 4 Patten Road, SW18

Mozart's Clarinet Quintet and Schubert's String Quintet in C major



Post scriptv

This is the Newsletter of The Wandsworth Society, a registered charity no 263737. The Society is concerned with the quality of life and the environment in Wandsworth town centre, Wandsworth Common and adjacent areas. If you are not already a member and would like to join please contact the Membership Secretary Gill Gray, details on page three.

Please address Letters to the Editor, any comments, or, even better, contributions to -

Peter Farrow 5 Windmill Road LONDON SW18 2EU,
or e-mail to - wandsworth.society@mac.com